United Nations

Press Release

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- Kuwait protests to the UN Security Council at alleged Iraq's armed infiltration on its territory. Iraq refutes the charge and says it is fabricated.

- Secretary-General invites President Cristiani of El Salvador and the General Command of FMLN -- Farabundo Marti Liberation Front for El Salvador -- to United Nations Headquarters, for consultations to break deadlock in current negotiations.

- Eighth United Nations International NGO meeting on Palestine concludes session; calls for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the UN.

- Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Earth Summit begins debate on the cross-sectoral issues of human settlements.

- European Community welcomes UNHCR agreement with South Africa for return of South African refugees and exiles.

- The Preparatory Commission for Law of the Sea concludes its Ninth session by reviewing progress made in subsidiary commissions.

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Kuwait has protested to the United Nations Security Council the reported violation of its territory by Iraqi forces. In a letter to the President of the United Nations Security Council, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohammad A Abulhasan, stated that there had been an attack by armed Iraqis on the island of Bubiyan, which had resulted in clashes. Mr. Abulhasan said that the Iraqis attacked with heavy weapons using two armed boats, supported by reinforcements of military boats. Kuwait's Air Force had countered the attack and had allegedly destroyed seven boats and its forces had taken 43 "elements" in civilian clothes as prisoners.

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The Kuwaiti Ambassador described the incident as premeditated and planned, and requested the Security Council to take decisive measures so that such acts were not repeated.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Charge d'Affaires, Sabah Talat Kadrat, in a letter to the Security Council, said that the Kuwaiti allegation was a "fabrication" and "without any foundation" and that Iraq had not violated the Council's resolutions. He said would cooperate with any commission of inquiry to establish the facts.

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The Secretary-General has invited President Alfredo Cristiani of El Salvador and the General Command of FMLN -- Farabundo Marti Liberation Front of El Salvador -- to United Nations Headquarters for consultations on 16 September, in order to break the deadlock preventing the current negotiations between both sides. Both President Cristiani and the General Command have accepted the Secretary-General's invitation.

The consultations will focus on the question of guarantees and conditions for the reintegration of FMLN members into the society.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), opened another regional office in that country. One of the functions of the office will be to receive complaints about violations of human rights.

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Two United Nations meetings on Palestine -- The European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium and the Eighth United Nations International meeting -- have ended their sessions in Vienna. The meetings were convened by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights, in response to a request by the General Assembly.

The European Regional NGO Symposium concluded with a call to all governments to support the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East and it strongly affirmed that the Palestinian people must be represented at all conferences by their chosen representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The international NGO meeting also called for the convening of the International Peace Conference under the United Nations auspices with participation of all parties including the PLO and Israel on an equal footing. The final Declaration considered it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation, and urged the establishment of an ad hoc United Nations Commission to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in a message to the international meeting, expressed concern about the continued uprising in the

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occupied Palestinian territory, the intifadah, which he said was a matter of serious concern. He described the situation in the Middle-East as volatile, for which reason, he said, he had maintained constant contact with parties in the area.

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The Preparatory Committee for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, meeting currently in Geneva, has begun its debate on the cross-sectoral issues of human settlements based on a report prepared by the Conference Secretary-General Maurice Strong.

Speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, the representative of Finland said that there were three main reasons which justify taking human settlement issues into consideration in the Earth Summit context. First, he said, a safe and sound living environment was a basic human need and right. Secondly, problems in the man-made environment had serious consequences for the state of the natural environment. Thirdly, the human settlements sector could provide tested instruments for addressing environmental problem through land-used planning and integrated settlement management.

The representative of Ghana pointed out that the objective of the draft decision on human settlements was to "get development back into the Earth Summit process and redress the current imbalance in the debate".

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In a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, the 12 Member States of the European Community said that they welcomed the agreement reached between the South African Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the process of the return of refugees and political exile to South Africa. According to the European Community, that agreement removed an important obstacle to progress towards substantive negotiations on a new Constitution for a democratic and non-racial society in South Africa.

Finally, the Community and its Member States expressed their hope that all outstanding questions could be resolved in order to enable negotiations to begin as soon as possible.

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The Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea had concluded its resumed ninth session at Headquarters by hearing reports on progress made by its subsidiary commissions.

Four Special Commissions are discussing questions related to the problems of land-based mineral producing States, arrangements for the start-up of the Authority's own seabed mining arm, formulation of a seabed mining code and various documents for establishing the Tribunal. A plenary on the Authority is preparing recommendations for setting up the Authority.

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Both the Authority and the Tribunal are to begin operation when the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea enters into force. Sixty ratifications are needed for that to occur; the total stands at 48 as of 9 August.

During the three-week summer session, the Commission approved the application of Interoceanmetal Joint Organization for registration as a pioneer investor in seabed mining. The firm, a consortium sponsored by Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union, is the sixth pioneer investor. China, France, India, Japan and the Soviet Union have already registered as pioneer investors.

At the closing meeting today, the developing countries expressed disappointment with the lack of progress in resolving a number of outstanding issues and called for flexibility on the part of the industrialized nations to resolve those matters, which include the transfer of technology, seabed mining production policy and various budgetary and financial concerns.

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